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50

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SECRET

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Central Intelligence Bulletin

CONTENTS

South Vietnam: The government crackdown on students in Saigon appears to have quieted the situation there for the moment. (Page 1)

Laos: The government is concerned over anticipated enemy attacks on key points in the south. (Page 3)

North Vietnam - USSR: Party First Secretary Le Duan has left Moscow with no new gestures of support from the Soviets. (Page 5)

Warsaw Pact: Meeting in Warsaw (Page 6)

Guyana: Control over foreign investments (Page 6)

SECRET

South Vietnam: The government crackdown on students in Saigon appears to have quieted the situation there for the moment, but student dissension is beginning to appear in other cities in South Vietnam.

Militant students in Saigon apparently have not yet decided how to proceed in the face of the government's new firmness, but it is anticipated that they will make a series of probes to see how far they can go. In the only demonstration of significance in the capital, about 200 students occupied the Ministry of Education on 9 May to protest the closing of the schools in the Saigon area. Police used tear gas to clear them from the building and detained about 80 students. Earlier, the government had temporarily released all of the students arrested on 5 May for occupying the empty Cambodian Embassy building.

Meanwhile, student dissidence has been reported in Hue and Da Nang and in five provinces in the delta. In most of the areas students from Saigon were reported to have joined local students, apparently to encourage protest demonstrations. Students either are protesting the closing of schools by local authorities or are boycotting classes in an effort to close schools still open. Their main grievances seem to be the government's crackdown on student dissidence in Saigon and the massacre of ethnic Vietnamese living in Cambodia.

In some localities, the authorities are trying to conduct a dialogue with the students. In Da Nang, however, officials are taking a tough line similar to that in Saigon, and according to the press some 15 students have been arrested and barbed-wire barricades have been placed around the schools. So far, however, both sides have apparently managed to avoid violence in all of these outlying areas. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

25X1

11 May 70

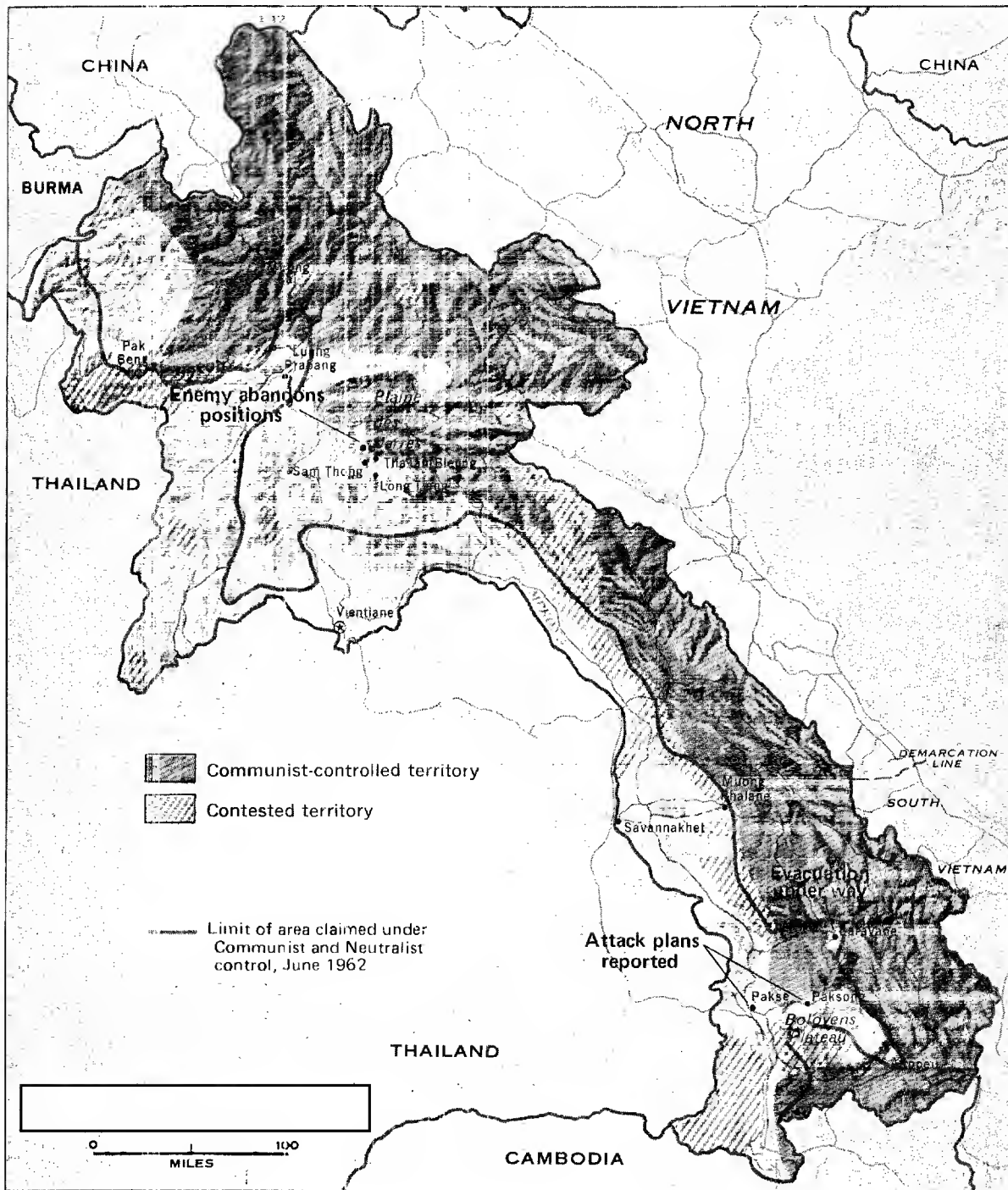
Central Intelligence Bulletin

1

SECRET

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Laos: Current Situation



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Laos: Military activity remained at a relatively low level over the weekend, but the government is gravely concerned over anticipated enemy attacks on Saravane and possibly other key points in the south.

The Communists appear to be capitalizing on the pessimism engendered among civilian and military leaders by the recent unexpected seizure of Attapeu town and of nearby government positions on the Bolovens Plateau. Employing more psychological than military pressure, they are circulating reports that Saravane and Paksong will be hit in the near future and--as at Attapeu--are offering safe passage to those who wish to leave.

There is no convincing evidence that the Communists see a need to take over the principal centers in southern Laos at this time. It is possible, however, that their stymied campaign in the north or the new military situation in Cambodia and South Vietnam has altered their plans.

Prime Minister Souvanna has submitted a written request for US assistance in the evacuation of about 4,000 dependents of military and civilian officials stationed in Saravane. An initial contingent of 500 persons was removed on 10 May.

[REDACTED] it is estimated that the Communists have upwards of 1,000 troops in the area. The Saravane garrison numbers less than 600 army, police, and armed civilian personnel. Their motivation to defend the town is likely to decrease if their dependents are evacuated. It is anticipated that the evacuees will be taken to the military region headquarters at Pakse and that much of the general population will also want to move to this center.

25X1

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11 May 70

Central Intelligence Bulletin

3

SECRET

25X1

[redacted] [redacted] Pakse [redacted] will be hit again with 122-mm. fire in the near future. The most recent attack on 1 May did little physical damage but contributed to the apprehensions about Communist military intentions in the south. About 200 government irregulars have reoccupied the main guerrilla base near Attoupeu; efforts are continuing to locate the bulk of the Laotian Army troops whose withdrawal had permitted the enemy's seizure of the base on 9 May.

25X1
25X1

In the north, the situation around Long Tieng continues to improve. Government forces have discovered two company-sized bivouac sites north of Sam Thong and a probable battalion headquarters northwest of Tha Tam Bleung that apparently had been abandoned by the enemy. [redacted]

25X1

11 May 70

Central Intelligence Bulletin

4

SECRET

SECRET

North Vietnam - USSR: Party First Secretary Le Duan has departed from Moscow after three weeks of consultations without any new public gestures of support from the Soviets.

A TASS report of 8 May said only that Le Duan and Brezhnev had "exchanged opinions on questions connected with the intensification of US imperialist aggression in Indochina" and had "discussed some measures to strengthen cooperation." The fact that Hanoi sent its top man during a critical period in Indochina indicates that the talks were probably extremely important from Hanoi's point of view. The minimal treatment accorded his departure by TASS suggests that the consultations may not have produced results satisfactory to both parties.

Meanwhile, in a blast at Secretary General U Thant, Hanoi has for the first time expressed clear opposition to an "international conference on Cambodia." In a broadcast on 9 May, Hanoi took the Secretary General to task for not condemning US aggression and for not heeding the warning issued in late April by the Communists at their Indochina "summit" meeting. Hanoi's new statement goes beyond earlier formulations, stating that "no one has the right to convene any international conference on the question of Cambodia."

25X1

11 May 70

Central Intelligence Bulletin

5

SECRET

SECRET

NOTES

Warsaw Pact: The chiefs of government and perhaps the defense ministers of the pact states reportedly will meet in Warsaw on 15 May. One purpose of the meeting would be to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the founding of the organization. The pact leaders might also issue another statement on the proposed Conference on European Security and attempt to anticipate in some fashion the results of the NATO ministerial meeting scheduled for late May. The pact meeting would follow by three days a CEMA meeting in Warsaw, which will also be attended by the chiefs of government. [REDACTED]

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Guyana: The government is moving to extend its control over existing foreign investments. The major bauxite industries have been notified by the Prime Minister that the government is seeking equity participation in their operations. The extent of this local "meaningful participation" is unclear at this time, although the government announced last month that future concessions in exploiting the nation's natural resources would require a minimum Guyanese participation of 51 percent. The speed of this latest move, although inevitable, was unexpected and will add to the pessimism of the business community. [REDACTED]

25X1

11 May 70

Central Intelligence Bulletin

6

SECRET

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